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Selections

for the

Piano



Slumber Song, Op. 124

No. 16

SCHUMANN

GRADE II—A

No. 25







PIANO

Grade II-A

SLUMBER SONG, OP. 124, No. 16.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—ROBERT ALEXANDER SCHUMANN (Shoo-män).

Born at Zwickau, Saxony, June 8, 1810.

Died at Eudenberg near Bohn, Germany, July 29, 1856.

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ROBERT SCHUMANN was the son of a bookseller, at Zwickau, who died when the boy was not yet sixteen, leaving him to the care of his mother. The boy was of a dreamy, silent nature, and had manifested an irrepressible love for music from his earliest years. His father procured for him lessons upon the organ, but it was intended that he study law. Accordingly after the Gymnasium (high school) in Zwickau, he entered the university at Leipzig at the age of eighteen as a student in law. Here also he continued to give much time to music, and here he had lessons from Master Wieck, whose daughter, Clara, he afterwards married. He was then determined to be a pianist, but in his haste he weakened one of the fingers of his right hand irreparably.

Later he went to the university at Heidelberg, and there he attended the lectures of Thibaut, known for his book upon "Purity in Musical Art." In place of working up his legal questions in the books, he spent most of his time composing, and before he was twenty he had composed part or all of his opus 1, "Variations upon the name Abegg." His mother, after much pain, gave her consent to Robert's becoming a musician, and thenceforward Schumann lived much of his life at Leipzig, and before he was thirty years of age had composed practically all his important piano works.

Schumann was one of the four young men who, between them, during the decade from 1830 to 1840, created modern piano playing. The other three were Mendelssohn, Chopin and Liszt. At the present time the piano works of Schumann are esteemed at their full value, as being musical, highly original, and full of the poetry of the human heart. He is nearly always either deeply confidential with the piano, as if dreaming through it, or else he is bounding with life and irrepressible vitality and power. Another thing about Schumann is his having composed so very many pieces which are short, striking, and easy to play; nevertheless, each is a poem,—a moment in the heart of man.

FORM AND STRUCTURE.—This piece is in composite song form. The first period comprises the first sixteen measures, the middle phrase runs from measure 17 to measure 24, and the third part runs from measure 25 to measure 46, and is a repetition of the period of the first part. This concludes the first division. The second division or *trio* commences with measure 41 and is a four-measure phrase used three times over. The second time it is in the key of the dominant; that is, in the key of D, but in the major form of that key, whereas the original statement of the phrase is in the minor. The third statement of the phrase is like the first. This concludes the second division of the piece. The third division begins with measure 53 and goes to measure 92, the remaining measures of the piece being an extension or *coda* to bring the piece to a more gradual close.

The formal outline of this piece is very sharply defined. The first period in the piece is sixteen measures long, and, as we have stated, comes to a close in measure 16. The first section of the melody, which is the first half of it, ends in measure 8, a phrase of the period being four measures long.

In order that the pupil may derive the most benefit from this piece, we will give a few definitions. A period is a complete musical sentence. The most usual length of a period is eight measures. The next most usual form is a multiple of eight measures, as in this piece, sixteen. Periods also exist of four measures length, and also of irregular lengths such as nine, ten, eleven or twelve measures. A section is half of a period and a phrase is half of a section, although the word *phrase* has other meanings besides, and when we speak of phrase groups we refer to combinations which do not fall into period form. We also attach another meaning to the word *phrase* which really is independent of form construction; that is, the divisions into which a melody falls, shown by means of the musical punctuation or phrasing. A composite

Ano, 25-2

song form is one which is built up of three independent parts or divisions. One or more of these divisions will be one of the song forms, as is the case with this piece. The first and third divisions are written in large three-part song form. The song form is called large because the periods composing it are large; that is, sixteen-measure periods.

POETIC IDEA.—We have already had occasion to speak of the habit of Schumann to attach an emotional scheme to his compositions. The title of this piece gives a sufficient clue to the emotional content. We shall not attempt to fit a story to this piece, but only point out a few of its salient features. The movement in the accompaniment of this piece is the following: Each half measure has two eighth-notes separated by two sixteenth-notes. The peculiar form of this accompaniment is an imitation of the rock-

ing motion of a cradle. It is very realistic, and the motion is continued almost without interruption throughout the first division of the piece. In the second division of the piece, beginning with measure 41, the mood or movement changes. We can imagine that a child is fast asleep and dreaming. The music is weird and of a drowsy, drone-like character. With measure 53 the original rocking movement is again resumed and continued to the end of the piece.

HOW TO STUDY.—Perhaps the first thing to do is to play the accompaniment, using the hands as indicated,—the music written in the lower staff being for the left hand, and in the upper staff for the right hand. In measure 3, for instance, the accompaniment figure extends over into the upper staff, and the same thing happens in measure 4, and, indeed, in many other measures. This accompaniment figure should be played so as to get the rocking effect mentioned above. Of course, this effect will not be absolutely complete until the melody part is combined with it, because the note on the fourth eighth of the accompaniment is tied back to the preceding eighth. Some measures, however, do not exhibit this tie, and in those measures it will be no trouble at all to get the rocking effect.

The next thing to do is to study the melody by itself very carefully. Observe the marks of expression with extreme care. Pay particular attention to all slurs and accent marks. Of course, the rocking figure must be retained very distinctly and its expression follows the expression of the melody. If the outlines of the accompaniment are perfectly clear, and if the melody is expressively rendered, that is all that will be necessary to get a good performance of the piece.

In measure 19 notice that the melody runs along in dotted eighth-notes, a dotted eighth-note being equal to an eighth plus a sixteenth; consequently, the second and fourth of these dotted eighth-notes fall on the second sixteenth-note in each half of the measure. In measure 43 on the fifth eighth there is a sharp dissonance in the left hand part. Do not be afraid of this dissonance, but play it out firmly and strongly so that it does not sound like a mistake. It is one of the most characteristic features of this part of the piece. The same thing happens in measures 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52. Notice especially the marks of expression. The major repetition of this phrase, beginning in measure 45, is played *pp*.

To get technic in the left hand part of the first measure, practice an exercise as follows: Play E \flat -B \flat with the fifth and third fingers, then play E \flat -G with the first and second fingers, and repeat this exercise many times. Play another exercise as follows: The octave E \flat -E \flat with the second and fifth fingers, then B \flat -G with the third and first fingers and repeat this exercise many times. Next, play the part in measure 1 as written, but omit the tie at first. These three exercises should enable you to place your fingers accurately and securely upon the notes of that measure. Similar exercises should be invented for similar places. In measure 41, play the following exercise: B \flat -G with the first and third fingers of the right hand, D with the fifth finger, and repeat this combination many times. Similar skips may be practiced in the same way.

Use the pedal as directed.

SLUMBER SONG.

Specially Edited.

Allegretto.

R. SCHUMANN. Op. 124, No 16.

Composed 1841

p (ben cantata la melodia, l'accompagnamento sempre *pp*)

25-4

25 *a tempo.* 26 27 28

29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36

37 38 39 40

41 42 43 44

45 46 47 48

pp

49 *mf* 50 *pp* 51 52 3

53 *p* 54 55 56 57

58 59 60 61 62

63 64 65 66 67

68 69 *mf* 70 71 72

73 74 75 76 *dim.*

ritard.

dim.

4

a tempo.

77 78 79 80

81 82 83 84

85 86 87 88 89

90 91 92 93

94 95 96 97 98

dim. *pp*

Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm *

Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm *

Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm *

Rm * Rm * Rm * Rm *

Rm * Rm * Rm *



